device, the combination of:

a) means for inputting first information;

b) means for receiving[storing] secret key information from[which is stored in] an external device and for storing such received secret key information, said secret key information being the secret key of a person using the information input device[fed from the external device; and];

c) means for generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the secret key information; and

d) means for outputting said first information containing said digital signature,

whereby the output information is provided with the digital signature of the person who uses the information input device.

6.   (twice amended) An information input device comprising:

a) means for inputting first information;

b) means for compressing said first information;

c) means for receiving[storing] secret key information from an external device and for storing said received secret key information, said secret key information

being the secret key of a person using the information input

device[which is stored in an external device and fed from the

external device; and]_;

      d)   means for generating a distinguishing

information based on the secret information and the information

compressed by said compressing means[,]_; and_

      e) means for outputting said first information

containing said digital signature_,

      wherein said external device stores the secret key

corresponding to a registered user_; and_

      whereby the output information is provided with the

digital signature of the person who uses the information input

device.

---

      10.   (twice amended) An image input apparatus

comprising:

      a)   an image input device for inputting said image

data;

      b) means for receiving secret key information from

an external device_;

      c[b])   a memory for storing secret_ key_ information

which is_ received from said[stored in an] external device and

received[fed] from the external device, said secret key

information being the secret key of a person using the

information input device[; and];

   d[c]) an operation device for carrying out an

operation using the image data and the secret information; and

   e) means for outputting said first information

containing said digital signature,

   whereby the output information is provided with the

digital signature of the person who uses the information input

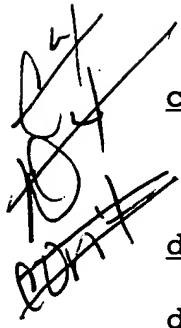device.

---

   14.   (twice amended) In an[An] image input system

[comprising]:

   a)   a first terminal device for inputting image

data;

   b)   a second terminal device for receiving secret

key information from an external device and having a memory for

storing said received secret key information, said secret key

information being information which corresponds[is

corresponding] to a user;[and]

   c)   an operator for executing a command based on an

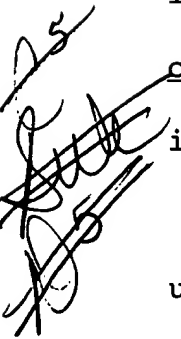algorithm for generating a digital signature by using the image

data and the secret_key_ information; and

d) means for outputting said first information containing said digital signature,

whereby the output information is provided with the digital signature of the person who uses the information input device.

---

26.   (twice amended)   An information input method comprising:

a)   a step of inputting first information_into an information input device;

b)   a step of_receiving secret key information from an external device and for storing_the received secret key information, said secret key information being the secret key of a person using the information input device[which is stored in an external device and fed from the external device];[and]

c)   a step of generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the_received secret key information; and

d) outputting said first information containing said digital signature,

whereby the output information is provided with the

digital signature of the person who uses the information input device.

27. (twice amended) A computer readable memory programmed to cooperate[which] cooperates with a data processor and an information input unit to carry out:

(a) a step of inputting first information into an information input device;

(b) a step of receiving[storing] secret key information from[which is stored in] an external device and storing the received secret key information, said secret key information being the secret key of a person using the information input device[fed from the external device; and];

(c) a step of[for] generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the secret key information received from the external device; and

d) outputting said first information containing said digital signature,

whereby the output information is provided with the digital signature of the person who uses the information input device.